SAUDI ARABIA

Adapted from translation by Arab Support Committee, P.O.B. 2342, Station A, Berkeley, Cal. 94702. Taken from original Arabic in 1972 issues of *Al Jazeerah Al- Jadeedah* organ of People's Democratic Party of Al Jazeerah Al Arabiah- "Saudi Arabia".

During the late thirties, major oil reserves were found in Saudi Arabia and later exploration revealed that the Arab Gulf contained nearly three-fourths of the world's proven oil reserves. In addition to oil exploration, U.S. imperialism began considering the strategic importance of Saudi Arabia for securing and protecting its interests. Therefore, ARAMCO, the Arabian American Oil Company, carried out the task of tightly linking the Saudi Arabian economy to that of the U.S. and Western European countries by gradually converting it into a consumer market. This dependency accounted for the inability of any industry, even light industry, to emerge and, moreover, led to gradual deterioration of the entire agricultural sector.

Eventually, ARAMCO became a state within a state, which intervened in nearly every issue related to the lives of the people. By securing total control of the country, it strengthened imperialism's foothold in the area and, in the process, Saudi Arabia was transformed into an active center for intelligence gathering and other imperialist activities. This was accomplished by establishment of several U.S. military bases in the country, such as Dhahran, Khamis-Mushait, etc.

BACKWARDNESS OF THE REGIME

During the last thirty years, Saudi Arabia's economic base has changed from one characterized by agriculture and pasturage to one totally dependent upon oil and its derivatives. Despite this and the fact that such a transition generally produces corresponding changes in a country's political and cultural structures, the Saudi regime has resisted and actually fought any attempts to reform its feudal and autocratic structure. For example, it found intensification of tribal chauvanism and the antagonism between tribes and city-dwellers easy ways to control the people. It, therefore, exploited the contradiction between Bedouins and city-dwellers to build a large army of the former, the National Guard.Since the June, 1969 events, during which the government purged many nationalist officers in the regular army, the National Guard has become the primary force for protecting the status quo.[1]

RELIGION

While the regime claims that Ibn Saud's royal family came to power to maintain the Islamic religion and to protect its holy places from waves of athiesm and "deviant" thinking, the fact is that, until now, religion, as the regime interprets it, is the very tool by which the family has been able to legitimize and temporarily sustain its authority. Although traditional thinking reinforces the regime's claim, the Saudi government uses its media and cultural establishments to further insure that the people will have no doubts that the royal family has legitimately inherited the Islamic caliphate. To further legitimate autocratic rule, the regime uses the Koran as its state constitution.

From this groundwork, the regime launches its attacks against national and other progressive revolutionary movements and governments. For example, the media, controlled by the government, labels revolutionaries as "perverts" and "atheists," thus providing its secret agents with a means for attaching these labels to individuals suspected of disloyalty.

ECONOMIC RESOURCES

To insure uninterrupted exploitation against any national and democratic threats, the imperialists readily extend aid and means of oppression to their lackeys and, here again, Saudi Arabia is no exception. By plundering national wealth and with imperialist assistance, the reactionary regime has extended its activities to bordering Arab countries. In 1971-72, Saudi Arabia spent almost two-thirds of its budget on counter-revolutionary activities, such as hiring of mercenaries.

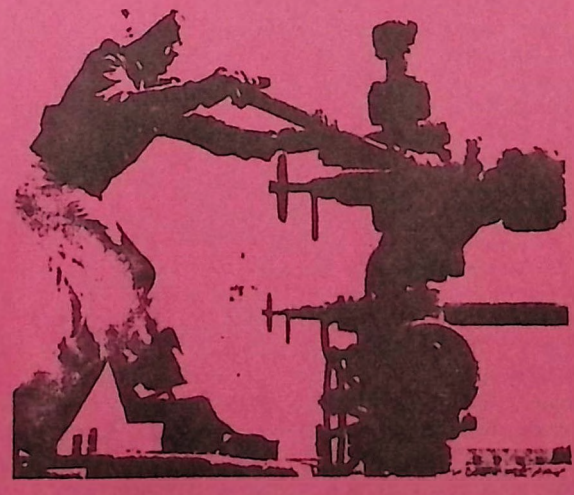
THE YEMEN ARAB REPUBLIC

The Saudi regime's role as gendarme for the reactionary and imperialist forces in the area was not obvious until its conspicuous intervention in the September 26 Revolution (1962) in North Yemen.

After the successful revolution of September 26, 1962 overthrew the theocratic and absolute monarchy of the Imam, the Yemen Arab Republic was born. The impact was felt in all the Arabian Peninsula and it represented a great challenge to reactionary forces in the area, especially neighboring Saudi Arabia. Before its task was complete, the Saudi regime's counter-revolutionary plan went through these stages:

STAGE 1: During this stage the regime refused to recognize the new republic; instead, it embraced elements of the Imam's regime and gave them arms and aid. However, this attempt to topple the new republic failed due to its already established strength and popularity.

STAGE 2: In response to its failure, the Saudi regime undertook direct intervention. Aside from exploiting unresolved class contradictions within the new republic, the Saudi government used its vast economic and military capabilities and finally aborted the revolution. This was only possible with the support of mercenaries recruited from reactionary regimes like Iran, Pakistan, and Jordan. As a result, the Yemen Arab Republic remained progressive in name only, and the Saudi regime would not have recognised even that, if it were not for the establishment of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY) and the escalation of armed struggle in the Arab Gulf, both of which posed a greater threat to the Saudi regime and its allies in the area.



The flow of oil: From the Christmas tree at the wellhead

1. In June, 1969, nationalist officers in the army tried to overthrow the regime. However, CIA agents and the regime's intelligence agencies discovered the plan shortly before it was supposed to be carried out. Consequently, all suspected elements, whether military or civilian, were either murdered or thrown into prison for an indefinite period.

THE REVOLUTION IN THE PDRY

The left wing of the National Front came to power on June 22, 1969 and instituted major transformation in the PDRY's economic, social, and political organization as outlined in the following program:

a. Liberation of the country's economy from foreign domination through nationalization of banking, navigation, petroleum distribution, insurance, and foreign trade.

b. Assurance of an agrarian reform law that ended domination by feudal and semi-feudal landlords for once and for all and ruled out the possibility of a neo-colonialist come-back.

c. Creation of a popular democratic atmosphere in which the masses' creativity and initiative was prompted, thus enabling them to strengthen their own revolution.

d. Purging of counter-revolutionary elements from the government and transformation of the army and police forces to serve the interests of the masses.

In addition to these major changes, the National Front of the PDRY has also adopted a revolutionary foreign policy that is hostile to colonialism and imperialism and expresses its obligation to movements of progress and liberation throughout the world:

"Our revolution politically and materially supports all progressive and democratic revolutionary forces in the Arab World, especially:
1) The armed people's revolution in the occupied Arab Gulf under the leadership of the People's Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Arab Gulf (PFLOAG);
2) The national liberation movement in the Arab Peninsula that is struggling against American military presence and domination by their monopoly interests, and for the overthrow of the Saudi regime;
3) The Palestinian resistance movement in its just struggle against imperialism and Zionist settlement."

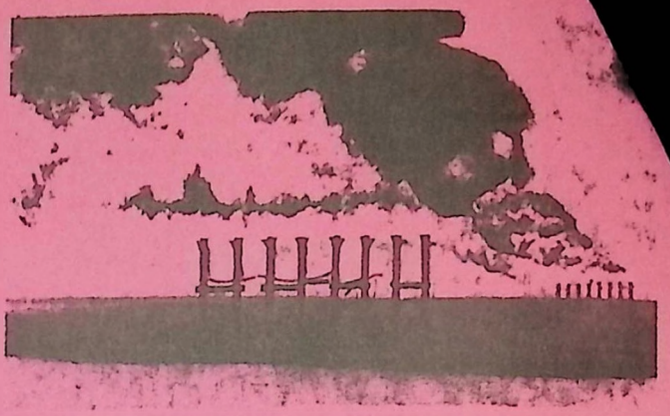
Previously, we discussed Saudi Arabia's intolerance toward the Yemen Arab Republic which had introduced only limited national and democratic aspirations. Thus, it is obvious that the regime could not tolerate the existence of the PDRY with an unlimited national and democratic program, which has even dared to support liberation struggles in the area, including liberation of Saudi Arabia itself. Consequently, the regime's efforts to crush the PDRY have gone through the following stages.

STAGE I: The revolution, led by the National Front, began in the Radfan mountains on October 14, 1963. During the struggle, many elements betrayed and actually opposed the revolution, such as decadent sultans, tribal chiefs, and traitor groups like the South Arabian League (SAL). After the revolution won in 1967, Saudi Arabia embraced some of these elements, trained, and armed them to prepare for the day that they could be used against the PDRY.

After the PDRY's historic nationalization of foreign interests on November 27, 1969, the Saudi regime fabricated the events of Wadia, accusing the PDRY of attaicking this border post. It was the hope of Saudi Arabia that the PDRY would respond to this accusation by sending its troops to the area, thus opening the possibility that counter-revolutionary elements, like the SAL could overthrow the progressive government from within. This plan failed, and the conspiracy was exposed in 1970.

STAGE 2: After discovery and failure of this conspiracy, Saudi Arabia devised a new scheme for infiltration and guerrilla warfare inside the PDRY which included hiring of mercenaries from Arab tribes and recruiting of reactionary Yemenites residing inside Saudi Arabia.

To carry out this plan, the Saudi regime obtained the help of North Yemen. As a result, mercenary forces crossed North Yemen's borders and entered the PDRY's first and second regions. However, these forces met strong resistance, especially in the fifth region, where the masses confronted and totally defeated them.



STAGE 3: All previous attempts to crush the PDRY were courageously defeated and, once again, Saudi Arabia is preparing for direct confrontation. To make its next attempt succeed, the Saudi regime is massing troops in its Southern Region, multiplying its military capabilities, conducting military maneuvers, and arming North Yemeni troops on the PDRY's borders.

THE REVOLUTION IN THE ARAB GULF

The struggle against British colonialism in Dhofar began its revolutionary path on June 9, 1965. After the Second Conference (September, 1968), and led by the People's Front (later to become the People's Front for Liberation of Oman and the Arab Gulf, PFLOAG), the June 9th Revolution broadened its program to include the entire Gulf and grounded itself in the masses' day-to-day struggles against backwardness and poverty. On one hand, this program's implementation led to greater victories on the military, ideological, and mass levels. At the same time, a successful revolutionary movement in a neighboring region posed a threat to both the Saudi regime and the oil monopolies. As a consequence, plans to destroy this movement began when Saudi Arabia agreed to join Britain in supplying Sultan Qabus of Oman with both military and economic assistance. However, this is just the beginning of efforts to crush revolution in the Arab Gulf.

THE PALESTINE REVOLUTION

It is no secret that the Saudi regime's history of conspiracies against national liberation struggles in the Arab World also includes the Palestinian people. For example, the regime was against the 1936 Revolution collaborated with other reactionary governments to bring about the 1948 defeat, conspired with the Zionist-imperialist enemies on June 5, 1967, and opposed the Palestinian Resistance that arose after the June war.

For its complicity with imperialism during the Six-Day War, the regime experienced isolation and contempt from some Arab regimes and the Arab masses, including its own citizens. However, this isolation was interrupted when certain Arab governments, led by Egypt, called for a "unity of Arab ranks," regardless of political differences. Using this call to its advantage, the Saudi regime was able to bribe its way out of isolation easily.

Nevertheless, Saudi Arabia learned a lesson and reshaped its strategy to include token support of the Palestinian Resistance. However, it did not ignore the meaning of a successful Palestinian struggle in the Arab World and attempted to undermine and limit the movement's objectives by making its al-

oken support "conditional." At the same time, gime collaborated with other reactionary for- like the Jordanian government, in an effort to idate the Palestinian Revolution.

In addition, the regime launched a program to mit the Palestinian Resistance's support and in- luence within Saudi Arabia. The government garassed jailed or deported progressive Palestinians, and, after the September, 1970 massacre, prohibited Palestinians from working in, or even entering, sensitive oil regions such as Ras Tanura. Palestinians inside Saudi Arabia are prohibited from any political activity in support of the Resistance, and all citizens are forbidden to participate in or support the Palestinian struggle. If this is violated, persons' names are placed on the "wanted list," and they can be subjected to harassment, imprisonment, and torture.

While putting "conditions on support to the Palestinians, the regime freely gives financial and military aid to organized efforts to destroy the Resistance. The most glaring example was in the September, 1970 Massacre, in which Saudi Arabia provided support to help crush the Resistance.

BACKWARDNESS AND THE REFUSAL TO CHANGE

The Saudi Arabian monarchy is the last remnant of the Middle Ages, whose most distinguishing characteristic is absence of the simplest forms of freedom and democracy. Even imperialism recognizes the need for reform, if only for propaganda reasons, but the regime, to date, has vehemently opposed all reform suggestions that would threaten the interests of the world's largest group of idlers--the Saudi Arabian royal family.

MASS RESENTMENT

To stifle growing mass resentment, the regime conducted a "witch hunt" in the last half of 1969 that involved imprisonment of nearly 2,000. This terror wave was aimed directly at the newly emerging national and progressive movement that was gaining throughout the country.

DISCONTENT IN THE ARMY

Mass discontentment is also reflected within the army and it led to imprisonment, exile, or execution of more than 100 officers in June, 1969. As mentioned previously, the regime must now put most of its confidence in the mercenary "National Guard."

CONCLUSION

While on the one hand the Saudi regime protects colonial and imperialist interests in the area, imperialism recognizes the need to evaluate the magnitude of internal strife in relation to the strength of national and democratic movements. First, such movements are in their embryonic stage and, thus, do not pose a great threat to the present regime. Second, if a made-in-U.S.A. replacement government takes power, it will be in response to internal threats to the present regime. Of necessity, the new regime must be internally strong in order to suppress local national and democratic movements. Consequently, it would be unable to concentrate as much effort on suppressing national and democratic movements and progressive governments throughout the area as does the present regime. Since an externally active reactionary government in the area is vital to U.S. interests, we do not foresee U.S. replacement of the Saudi regime in the immediate future. Thus, we conclude that Saudi Arabia's current regime will continue to play the counter-revolutionary role in the Arab World that we have described here. **********

IS THERE REALLY AN OIL BOYCOTT?

Among the many conflicting reports about the "oil embargo" voted upon by Arab nations in October, we find strong evidence that oil-rich states of the Arabian Peninsula have been busily producing for Western markets. From a *Knight News Service* report (1/7/74), we cite some of the following points:

a) *In December, 103 oil tankers sailed from Bahrain---40 more than in September, and more than in any month of 1973 except May (127 sailings.*

b) *In December, 98 tankers sailed from Kuwait ---more than in any month of 1973.*

c) *In December, 124 tankers sailed from Kharg Island in Iran---in contrast to a 1973 monthly average of 77 sailings.*

d) *From analysis of Lloyd's of London shipping reports, it was found that, from the six principal Arabian Peninsula ports, there have been 478 tanker departures per month since October 19---compared with an average of 475 monthly departures during the rest of 1973.*

e) *In the final three months of 1972, the same six ports had recorded 1093 sailings, but, in the final three months of 1973---the supposed "embargo" months---there were 1435 sailings, or a 31 % increase.*

Where does it go?---*"The tankers have names like the Esso Aruba, the Texaco Newcastle, the Chevron Madrid, the Esso Okinawa, and the Chevron Antwerp. After loading up with oil, they head for ports like Milford Haven in Great Britain and, in some cases* unspecified destinations."

Knight News Service (1/7/74)

night clubbing...

Recently, at a party in the Saudi Arabian Embassy in honor of his wife, actress Eva Gabor, Frank Jameson, a California industrialist and close friend of Spiro Agnew, declared that, despite failure to obtain oil concessions in Baghdad in 1958, he would soon "try again" for oil rights in "that part of the world."

At a cocktail buffet in Agnew's luxurious home in Kenwood, Maryland, other guests beside Jameson included the ambassadors of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Lebanon, and Jordan. Popular comedian Danny Thomas, who speaks fluent Arabic, was flown in from California to circulate among Agnew's guests.

The cozy group enjoyed each other's company so much that another social event was arranged...this time in Las Vegas. A free "trial demonstration" Grumman Gulf, which would have cost $20000, was provided by the Grumman Aircraft Company. The Agnews, the Jamesons, several ambassadors, and other guests---once they reached Las Vegas---attended the "comeback" performance of Frank Sinatra at the well-known Mafia enterprise, Caesar's Palace.

Arrangements for the Las Vegas jaunt were made by a former Agnew aide, Peter Malatesta, who plans to be leaving his present job at the Department of Commerce in order to become "a kind of expediter between the Arab World and the U.S." A close associate of Malatesta's reportedly said: "If the Arabs need 2000 air-conditioners immediately, we would supply them...and if someone here wants oil, Peter could handle that." *Washington Post*, 2/5/74